

Announcing Our Top Ten Food Trends for 2010

The Food Channel® Makes Annual Predictions



The Food Channel® presents its Top Ten Food Trends for 2010. The list is based on research conducted by The Food Channel in conjunction with [CultureWaves®](#) and the International Food Futurists®. See our video, [here](#). Here's what to look for in the new year:



Keeping it Real

In a back-to-basics economy perhaps it is natural to return to basic ingredients. This isn't about retro, or comfort food, or even cost. It's about determining the essentials and stocking your pantry accordingly. It is about pure, simple, clean and sustainable. It is—dare we say—a shift from convenience foods to scratch cooking, now that we have more time than money and more food knowledge and concerns. [Read More](#)



Experimentation Nation

When's the last time you sat down to fine dining at a taco truck? If you live in L.A., chances are you've at least given it a try (Kimchee quesadilla, anyone?). How about selecting your own wine by the glass after sampling a few from an Enomatic system, the way you can at [Nora's Wine Bar & Osteria](#)? Restaurant concepts are in flux as people redefine what going "out" to eat means. Gastropubs, fusion dining, shareables, and communal tables are all being tried. While this started because of the economy it will finish because consumers will indicate what works for them and what doesn't. New concepts around "fresh" and DIY will do well. Experimentation is the trend, so we'll see concepts come and go. [Read More](#)

3

More
In Store

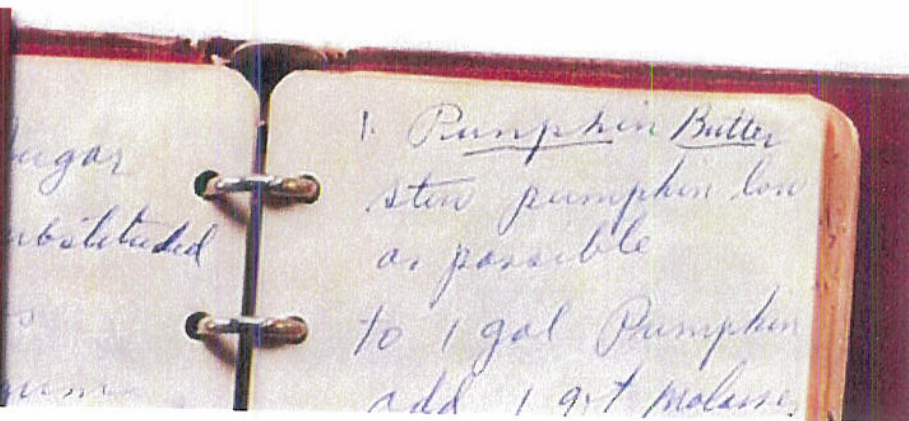


More in Store

We predict growth in grocery stores, particularly as private label assumes prominence. Those old generics have morphed into their own brands, so that there is a blurring and less of a caste system—there is no particular glory in using a “name brand” anymore (unless you are ketchup). And that’s not the only way grocery stores are growing. They have been paying attention to the trends and are doing things such as upgrading their delis and fresh take out sections, all the way to returning butchers to a place of prominence. Just as in restaurants, the stores that can help redefine the family dinner table are going to show the most gains. [Read More](#)

4

American,
the New Ethnic



American, the New Ethnic

This is all about flavor delivery. Immigration has come to the plate, and we are now defining a new Global Flavor Curve. Part comfort, part creativity, the latest flavors are coming from the great American melting pot. So, it’s about grandma’s food, but the recipes may be written in Japanese. American food is distinctive in its lack of identity outside of the hamburger—until, that is, you mix in our heritage. This is the year we’ll do it in a big way. The presentation of food, the flavor, and the experimentation is coming into its own in 2010. [Read More](#)

5

Food Vetting



Food Vetting

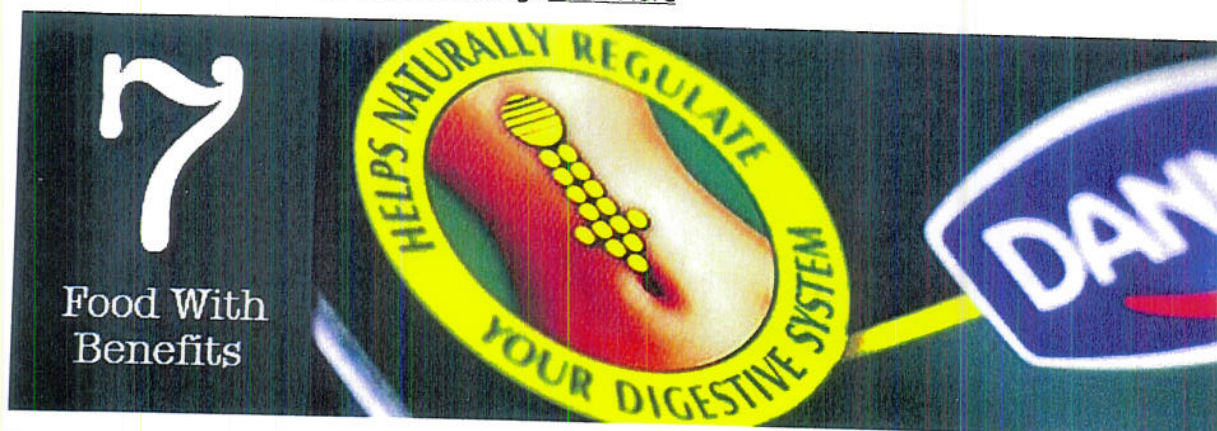
You are what you eat, and we are big into understanding ourselves! That’s what’s leading this trend—our constant need for assurance that we are eating the right things, that our food is safe, that we are not ingesting pesticides or anything that will someday prove harmful. If we can provide jobs, help the economy, protect animals and ensure a sustained food supply at the same time, well, that’s all the better. Call it food vetting, sourcing or whatever you want—the issue is that people are asking where

their food comes from. We call it the "new luxury food" because it can be more expensive to include that traceability into delivery, but we want it anyway. [Read More](#)



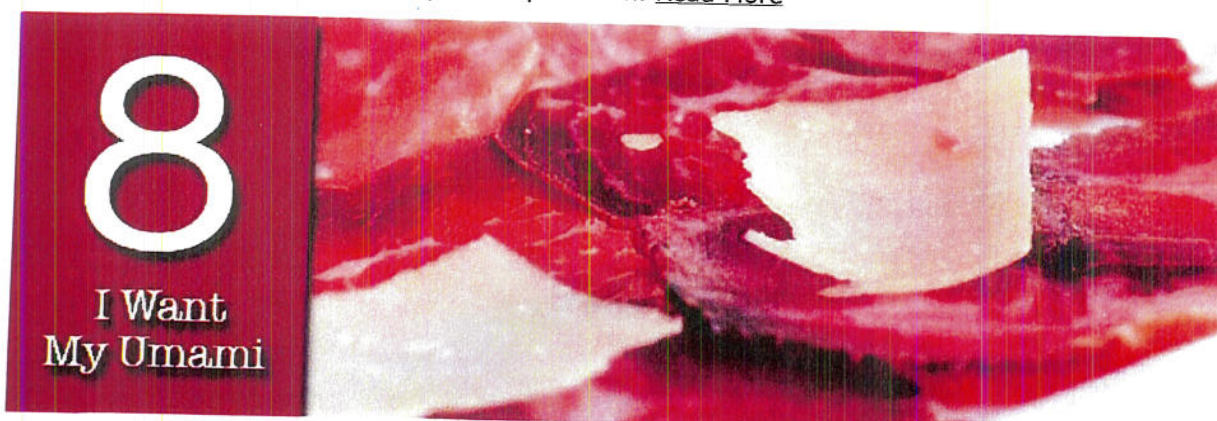
Mainstreaming Sustainability

We think people have mainstreamed sustainability. Unlike a year ago, when we were somewhat afraid to use the word, now it flows trippingly off the tongue. America is just now learning how to be sustainable, and Americans are holding themselves responsible. In 2010 we'll see people and companies becoming sustainable for authentic reasons; they are doing it to make a difference. After all, that's what comes with understanding. [Read More](#)



Food With Benefits

Call it what you will—nutritional, healthful, good-for-you—but this trend toward beneficial foods is growing at a pretty big rate. Expect food to either have nutrients added, or have the word "free" (gluten-free, allergy-free). Just last year we talked about "functional food," which was really about adding ingredients to pump up the nutritional value. Before that, it was "fortified." Next year we see this idea morphing into a grown-up version. [Read More](#)



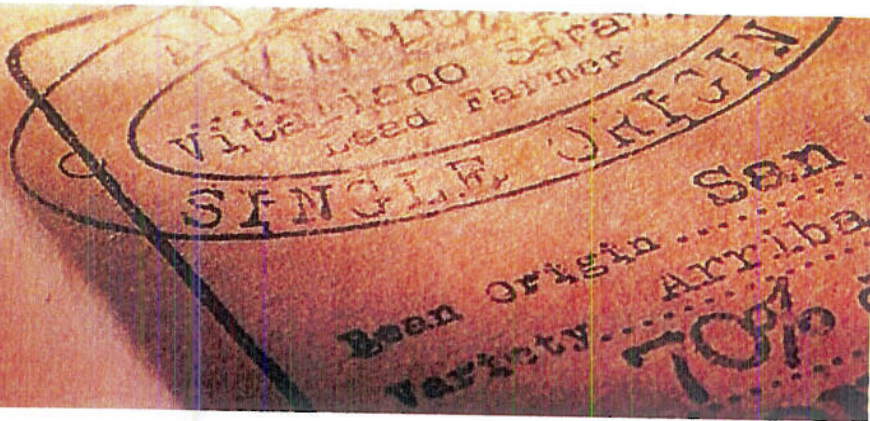
I Want My Umami

The "foodie" has settled into a more universal designation of someone who loves food—not a food snob. They are just as likely to want a PB&J as they are to try the latest soft shell crab sushi. And they may put French fries on it! The point is experimentation and a willingness to try new things. They are the ones who find their adventure leaning over the cookstove rather than climbing the mountaintop—although a mix of both would be just fine. The new foodie is driving all kinds of

adventures in flavor, too. [Read More](#)

9

Will Trade for Food



Will Trade for Food

We've called it "the rental economy" and just plain ol' bartering. In an era when you can rent a name-brand purse for a special event, we want to know how we can apply that same concept to consumables. So what do we do in a bad economy when we have more time than money and skills that we still want to put to use? We barter. We predict that we'll all see more of the barter system come into play now that technology can assist with the connections. [Read More](#)

10

I, Me, Mine



I, Me, Mine

It really is about you. It's the rise of the individual. While sharing has come into its own in restaurant concepts (goodbye additional plate charge), there is a separate but equal trend toward individuality. It's part of the reason why we are making our own cheese, smoking our own meats, and making our own specialty desserts. Expect more attention to the individual, but it's not just about portion size—it's also about food that reflects personality. With the decline of the economy, it's more important than ever that you have a voice. [Read More](#)

See our video, [here](#).

CHEF SURVEY: What's HOT in 2010

NATIONAL
RESTAURANT
ASSOCIATION

Keeping up with food and beverage trends is crucial to develop the right menu mix. That's why restaurateurs turn to the National Restaurant Association to help them stay abreast of the hottest menu trends. The Association each year surveys professional chef members of the American Culinary Federation. The latest survey, conducted in 2009, was based on the input of more than 1,800 chefs. Respondents ranked 214 items by how trendy they would be in 2010. See p. 11 for more information about methodology.

Top 20 Trends



- 1 Locally grown produce
- 2 Locally sourced meats and seafood
- 3 Sustainability
- 4 Bite-size/mini desserts
- 5 Locally-produced wine and beer
- 6 Nutritionally balanced children's dishes
- 7 Half-portions/smaller portion for a smaller price
- 8 Farm/estate-branded ingredients
- 9 Gluten-free/food allergy conscious
- 10 Sustainable seafood
- 11 Superfruits (e.g. acai, goji berry, mangosteen, purslane)
- 12 Organic produce
- 13 Culinary cocktails (e.g. savory, fresh ingredients)
- 14 Micro-distilled/artisan liquor
- 15 Nutrition/health
- 16 Simplicity/back to basics
- 17 Regional ethnic cuisine
- 18 Non-traditional fish (e.g. branzino, Arctic char, barramundi)
- 19 Newly fabricated cuts of meat (e.g. Denver steak, pork flat iron, Petite Tender)
- 20 Fruit/vegetable children's side items

Top Trends by Category



Appetizers/Starters

- 1 Amuse bouche
- 2 Mini-burgers/sliders
- 3 Appetizer combos/platters
- 4 Appetizer salads
- 5 Asian appetizers (e.g. tempura, spring rolls/egg rolls, satay, dumplings)

Main Dishes/ Center of the Plate

- 1 Locally sourced meats and seafood
- 2 Half-portions/smaller portion for a smaller price
- 3 Sustainable seafood
- 4 Non-traditional fish (e.g. branzino, Arctic char, barramundi)
- 5 Newly fabricated cuts of meat (e.g. Denver steak, pork flat iron, Petite Tender)

Sides/Starches

- 1 Quinoa
- 2 Braised vegetables
- 3 Brown/wild rice
- 4 Steamed/grilled/roasted vegetables
- 5 Buckwheat items

Desserts

- 1 Bite-size/mini desserts
- 2 Artisan/house-made ice cream
- 3 Dessert flights/combos
- 4 Savory desserts
- 5 Gelato/sorbet

Breakfast/Brunch

- 1 Ethnic-inspired breakfast items (e.g. Asian-flavored syrups, chorizo scrambled eggs, coconut milk pancakes)

- 2 Traditional ethnic breakfast items (e.g. huevos rancheros, shakshuka, ashta, Japanese)

- 3 Fresh fruit breakfast items

- 4 Seafood breakfast items (e.g. smoked salmon, oysters, crab cake)

- 5 Prix fixe brunches

Kids' Meals

- 1 Nutritionally balanced children's dishes
- 2 Fruit/vegetable children's side items
- 3 "Kid cuisine"/gourmet children's dishes
- 4 Children's entrée salads
- 5 Ethnic-inspired children's dishes



Produce

- 1 Locally grown produce
- 2 Superfruits (e.g. acai, goji berry, mangosteen, purslane)
- 3 Organic produce
- 4 Exotic fruit (e.g. durian, passion fruit, dragon fruit, paw paw, guava)
- 5 Micro-vegetables/micro-greens

Ethnic Cuisines and Flavors

- 1 Regional ethnic cuisine
- 2 Ethnic fusion
- 3 North African/Maghreb
- 4 Latin American/Nuevo Latino
- 5 Southeast Asian (e.g. Thai, Vietnamese, Burmese, Malaysian)

Other Food Items/ Ingredients

- 1 Artisanal cheeses
- 2 Black garlic

- 3 Ancient grains (e.g. kamut, spelt, amaranth)
- 4 Flatbreads (e.g. naan, papadum, lavash, pita, tortilla)

- 5 Flower syrup/essence

Preparation Methods

- 1 Liquid nitrogen chilling/freezing
- 2 Braising
- 3 Sous vide
- 4 Smoking
- 5 Oil-poaching/confit

Culinary Themes

- 1 Sustainability
- 2 Farm/estate-branded ingredients
- 3 Gluten-free/food allergy conscious
- 4 Nutrition/health
- 5 Simplicity/back to basics

Nonalcoholic Beverages

- 1 Specialty iced tea (e.g. Thai-style, Southern/sweet, flavored)
- 2 Organic coffee
- 3 Agua fresca
- 4 Green tea
- 5 Flavored/enhanced water

Alcohol and Cocktails

- 1 Locally-produced wine and beer
- 2 Culinary cocktails (e.g. savory, fresh ingredients)
- 3 Micro-distilled/artisan liquor
- 4 Organic wine/beer/liquor
- 5 Food-beer pairings



CHEF SURVEY: What's HOT in 2010

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Individual Categories Ranked by "Hot" Responses

		HOT TREND	Yesterday's News	Perennial Favorite
Appetizers/Starters				
1	Amuse bouche	53%	26%	21%
2	Mini-burgers/sliders	48%	46%	7%
3	Appetizer combos/platters	41%	33%	26%
4	Appetizer salads	40%	29%	30%
5	Asian appetizers (e.g. tempura, spring rolls/egg rolls, satay, dumplings)	34%	33%	33%
6	Mexican appetizers (e.g. tamales, taquitos, quesadilla)	26%	51%	23%
7	Soup	23%	23%	53%

Main Dishes/ Center of the Plate

1	Locally sourced meats and seafood	84%	5%	10%
2	Half-portions/smaller portion for a smaller price	75%	12%	13%
3	Sustainable seafood	73%	11%	16%
4	Non-traditional fish (e.g. branzino, Arctic char, barramundi)	70%	20%	10%
5	Newly fabricated cuts of meat (e.g. Denver steak, pork flat iron, Petite Tender)	70%	21%	10%
6	Tapas/mezze/dim sum (e.g. small plates)	62%	24%	14%
7	Grass-fed beef	61%	27%	12%
8	Free-range poultry/pork	60%	23%	17%
9	Inexpensive/underused cuts of meat (e.g. beef cheek, brisket, pork shoulder, skirt steak)	58%	19%	23%
10	Specialty/gourmet sandwiches	56%	18%	26%
11	Meatless/vegetarian entrées	52%	23%	25%
12	Low-calorie/low-fat entrées	49%	29%	22%
13	Vegan entrées	48%	33%	19%
14	Gourmet hot dogs/sausage (e.g. Kobe beef, duck, game)	45%	40%	14%
15	Buffalo/bison	43%	40%	17%
16	Gourmet burgers/build-your-own burgers	43%	34%	23%
17	Asian-inspired entrée salads	42%	39%	19%



		HOT TREND	Yesterday's News	Perennial Favorite
18	Ethnic/international soups and stews (e.g. menudo, ribollita, bouillabaisse)	42%	27%	31%
19	Game meats (e.g. venison, elk, rabbit, boar)	41%	36%	23%
20	Kobe beef (Wagyu)	40%	44%	16%
21	Lamb	31%	25%	44%
22	Game birds (e.g. quail, squab/pigeon, pheasant, duck)	30%	39%	30%
23	Bluefish	30%	50%	20%
24	Ostrich/emu	28%	63%	8%
25	Organ meats/offal	27%	57%	16%
26	Squid/octopus/cuttlefish	26%	48%	27%
27	Sea urchin	25%	60%	15%

Sides/Starches

1	Quinoa	55%	31%	13%
2	Braised vegetables	45%	28%	27%
3	Brown/wild rice	44%	24%	32%
4	Steamed/grilled/roasted vegetables	43%	18%	39%
5	Buckwheat items	42%	44%	14%
6	Barley	40%	39%	21%
7	Mashed/pureed vegetables (e.g. potatoes, cauliflower, parsnip)	37%	33%	30%
8	Lentils	36%	33%	31%
9	Couscous	33%	40%	27%
10	Polenta	31%	36%	33%
11	Grits	25%	41%	34%
12	Pasta	21%	24%	55%
13	Potatoes/french fries	16%	30%	54%

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RESTAURANT
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Desserts

		HOT TREND	Yesterday's News	Perennial Favorite
1	Bite-size/mini desserts	79%	13%	8%
2	Artisan/house-made ice cream	67%	15%	18%
3	Dessert flights/combos	61%	24%	14%
4	Savory desserts	57%	29%	14%
5	Gelato/sorbet	53%	21%	27%
6	Drinkable desserts	51%	39%	10%
7	Fresh fruit desserts	50%	14%	36%
8	Traditional ethnic desserts (e.g. delimanjoo, flan, qatayef)	39%	32%	29%
9	Cheese plates	39%	29%	32%
10	Cupcakes	25%	52%	23%
11	Crème brûlée	14%	32%	54%

Breakfast/Brunch

1	Ethnic-inspired breakfast items (e.g. Asian-flavored syrups, chorizo scrambled eggs, coconut milk pancakes)	66%	23%	11%
2	Traditional ethnic breakfast items (e.g. huevos rancheros, shakshuka, ashta, Japanese)	50%	24%	25%
3	Fresh fruit breakfast items	43%	16%	41%
4	Seafood breakfast items (e.g. smoked salmon, oysters, crab cake)	42%	31%	28%
5	Prix fixe brunches	41%	33%	26%

		HOT TREND	Yesterday's News	Perennial Favorite
6	Breakfast sandwiches	33%	33%	34%
7	Yogurt/parfait	33%	33%	34%
8	French toast/stuffed French toast	30%	33%	37%
9	Breakfast hash	28%	37%	36%
10	Omelets	17%	26%	56%
11	Poached eggs	17%	37%	47%

Kids' Meals

1	Nutritionally balanced children's dishes	77%	8%	15%
2	Fruit/vegetable children's side items	69%	10%	21%
3	"Kid cuisine"/gourmet children's dishes	69%	22%	9%
4	Children's entrée salads	58%	30%	11%
5	Ethnic-inspired children's dishes	53%	35%	12%
6	"Fun-shaped" children's items	25%	49%	27%
7	Traditional children's dishes (e.g. chicken nuggets, hamburgers, hot dogs, meatballs)	16%	34%	49%

Produce

1	Locally grown produce	88%	2%	10%
2	Superfruits (e.g. acai, goji berry, mangosteen, purslane)	73%	20%	7%
3	Organic produce	73%	18%	9%
4	Exotic fruit (e.g. durian, passion fruit, dragon fruit, paw paw, guava)	63%	24%	13%
5	Micro-vegetables/micro-greens	59%	29%	11%
6	Heirloom tomatoes	56%	15%	28%
7	Specialty potatoes (e.g. purple, fingerling, Baby Dutch Yellow)	56%	24%	20%
8	Fresh herbs	54%	4%	42%
9	Pomegranates	50%	32%	18%
10	Figs	47%	25%	28%
11	Root vegetables (e.g. parsnips, rutabaga, beets)	44%	20%	36%
12	Fresh beans/peas (e.g. fava, sweet, snow)	44%	16%	40%
13	Asian mushrooms (e.g. shiitake, straw, enokitake, cloud ear fungus)	44%	27%	30%
14	Edamame	42%	38%	20%
15	Ramps	40%	38%	23%
16	Hot peppers (e.g. habanero, chipotle, ancho, jalapeno)	39%	23%	38%
17	Jerusalem artichoke/sunchoke	38%	38%	24%



100
Root
vegetables

CHEF SURVEY: What's HOT in 2010

NATIONAL
RESTAURANT
ASSOCIATION

Produce continued

		HOT TREND	Yesterday's News	Perennial Favorite
18	Dark/bitter greens (e.g. collards, kale, beet tops, broccoli rabe)	38%	26%	36%
19	Chanterelle mushrooms	38%	28%	34%
20	Avocado	35%	15%	50%
21	Fiddlehead fern	35%	43%	22%
22	Persimmons	34%	43%	23%
23	Nettles	33%	50%	17%
24	Morel mushrooms	33%	26%	41%
25	Radish/daikon	30%	46%	23%
26	Watercress	27%	40%	33%
27	Coconut	27%	32%	41%
28	Sweet potatoes/yams	26%	23%	51%
29	Artichoke	26%	25%	48%
30	Watermelon	25%	19%	55%
31	Cucumber	19%	27%	54%

Ethnic Cuisines and Flavors

1	Regional ethnic cuisine	70%	10%	20%
2	Ethnic fusion	60%	32%	8%
3	North African/Maghreb	54%	35%	11%
4	Latin American/Nuevo Latino	53%	26%	21%
5	Southeast Asian (e.g. Thai, Vietnamese, Burmese, Malaysian)	50%	23%	27%
6	Peruvian	50%	36%	14%



10
Sustainable
seafood

		HOT TREND	Yesterday's News	Perennial Favorite
7	Cuban	48%	34%	18%
8	Mediterranean	46%	20%	34%
9	Himalayan	41%	46%	13%
10	Spanish	39%	27%	34%
11	Korean	37%	42%	21%
12	Sushi	26%	31%	43%
13	French	19%	30%	51%

Other Food Items/Ingredients

1	Artisanal cheeses	63%	12%	24%
2	Black garlic	63%	26%	10%
3	Ancient grains (e.g. kamut, spelt, amaranth)	62%	29%	9%
4	Flatbreads (e.g. naan, papadum, lavash, pita, tortilla)	60%	19%	21%
5	Flower syrup/essence	57%	32%	11%
6	Salt (e.g. flavored, smoked, regional)	55%	26%	20%
7	Vegetable ceviche	55%	35%	11%
8	Ethnic condiments (e.g. raita/raitha, chimichurri, Sriracha, chutney, soy sauce)	53%	20%	27%
9	Agave	52%	34%	13%
10	Whole grain bread	47%	17%	36%
11	Aged meats (e.g. prosciutto, Iberian ham)	47%	14%	39%
12	Specialty ice	46%	40%	15%
13	Infused oils	44%	31%	25%
14	Hibiscus	42%	44%	14%
15	Specialty oils (e.g. truffle, sesame, grapeseed, hazelnut)	41%	23%	36%
16	Charcuterie	40%	29%	31%



80
Peruvian
cuisine

DOLCE!



Crunchy almond semifreddo is layered with frangipane cake and vanilla-wine reduction and encased in chocolate for an elaborate creation using classic Italian dessert components.

From rustic crostatas to creamy gelato and zabaglione, Italy has more ways than tiramisu to bring distinction to the dessert course.

Considering all the ruckus about Italian cuisine in the past few years, it's surprising more regional-Italian desserts didn't emerge sooner.

Although it's true that many Italians opt for fresh fruit or a caffè corretto (espresso "corrected" with a shot of grappa or sambuca), there's also a great tradition of interesting Italian desserts — from affogato to zabaglione — to say nothing of budino (pudding), panna cotta, semifreddo (semi-frozen custard) and various tortas. Life is dolce indeed for Italian desserts.

Beyond Tiramisu

"How many times can you make tiramisu and not be bored?" asks Pasquino (Pat) Vitiello, the second-generation chef and owner, with his brother Vincent, of the 50-year-old Queen Marie Italian Restaurant in Brooklyn Heights, N.Y.

There's not a tiramisu in sight on the dessert menu at the venerable Queen, but instead the lesser-known Amaretto Semifreddo, Tortino di Cioccolata (warm chocolate cake), fresh-fig gelato and Torta di Mele (farmhouse apple cake), all properly fatta en casa (made in house) by Pat himself.

"Like all Italian cooking, our desserts are a labor of love and a reflection of the bounty of the land," says Vitiello. "Some have become so popular that I would never be able to take them off the menu."

One such item is the Warm Chocolate Raviolini that Vitiello devised some 15 years ago, hybridizing sweet pasta and classic cannoli.

"I make an egg-pasta dough with some sugar and cocoa and fill it with ricotta impastata [a dry, fresh cheese made for pastry] that I get from the guy in Rome, N.Y., mixed with a little vanilla, orange extract and crumbled Belgian chocolate," Vitiello explains.

The pasta — which tastes just like cannoli — is frozen until an order comes in, when it's flashed in the fryer and served warm with cool crème anglaise.

"At first, I wondered if it would sell, but people recognize the ingredients, and now it's one of my signature desserts," he reports.

The Torta di Mele is a classically not-too-sweet Italian apple cake. "These are the kinds of desserts that are simple to produce in a farmhouse kitchen with whatever's in season," notes Vitiello, who

FLAVORNOMICS

THREE TIMELY TIPS FOR MAKING ITALIAN DESSERTS WORK FOR YOU

With consumer dessert preferences always shifting, and dessert menus in particular in need of an extra boost, tapping into the trend in newer Italian desserts could be just the thing for building incremental sales. Based on low-cost ingredients and simple techniques, these old-but-new desserts offer an Italian taste of familiar and affordable ingredients in interesting and approachable formats like puddings, cakes and frozen specialties.

COUPLE UP

Pairing gelato and Italian-style cookies like biscotti is an easy way to jump aboard the trend; there's an abundance of high-quality, pre-made items available, or you can tap into a local source.

SWEET SUPPORT

While many Italian sweets are simply prepared, partnering with suppliers and customizing with Italian-inspired signature treatments of fruit sauces or creative toppings makes these desserts extra easy.

EXTRA CASTING

Recast popular comfort desserts like bread pudding into Italian-style budino with the addition of extras like hazelnuts, almonds or raisins.

Creamy panna cotta, often served with caramel sauce and fresh fruit, is poised to become a dessert standard as the next crême brûlée.



QUEEN MARIE ITALIAN RESTAURANT

blind-bakes a mixture of butter and flour pressed into the pan as a rustic crust, then fills it with a homey apple custard made with milk, melted butter, vanilla and more flour. The cake is cut into wedges and served warm with gelato made with freshly grated cinnamon.

"The guys in the kitchen who have to grate cinnamon sticks hate me for it, but it makes all the difference in the world," Vitiello observes.

He also makes "about a million different kinds" of biscotti, many with seasonal ingredients, which are served alone or in an assortment, with or without the sweet Sicilian dessert wine known as zibibbo, into which one dips the crunchy, twice-baked little cookies.

Semifreddo is another classic Italian dessert, a kind of frozen mousse; Queen's is made with white chocolate, almond and mascarpone, and it's served with a chocolate polenta cake. Vitiello cooks the polenta in sugar water and stirs in plenty of shaved chocolate — "so it's almost black" — then pours it out into a sheet pan to set up before punching out little cakes that are wrapped and frozen until they're needed.

Of course, the Queen serves zabaglione, the elegantly light, chilled Marsala custard, over seasonal berries, as well as other Italian fruit-based dolce, such as Arancia Caramelizzata (poached oranges, with homemade vanilla-bean gelato and candied orange peel). One of the more unusual desserts is the Gatto di Pistachio, a moist, individual cake made with pistachios (ground with flour) and brown butter, egg whites and confectioners' sugar, with a dose of Sicilian pistachio paste, one of many specialty dessert products from that sweets-loving island. It's served with fresh raspberry coulis, white-chocolate shavings and raspberry-white-chocolate gelato.

Dialing Back the Sweet

"I don't really like dessert, except dark chocolate," admits Jason Rogers, culinary director and executive chef at Jill's Restaurant at the St. Julien Hotel & Spa in Boulder, Colo. "That's why I'm often drawn to Italian desserts; they're not too sweet."

KITCHEN *Insights*

"Rustic Italian cooking stems from cucina povera or 'cooking of the poor.' Resourceful Italian cooks made the best of what seasonal ingredients they had, leading to delicious results. Italian desserts follow this tradition when they feature affordable, seasonal ingredients and inexpensive pantry staples. They are great examples of stretching primary ingredients, (including over-the-hill fruit). *Italian desserts also have versatile forms* that can be flavored according to seasons, signature flavor profiles or a restaurant's particular cuisine. Panna cotta can take on all sorts of flavors in its cream-milk base. Restaurateurs can distinguish their versions with unique cookie pairings to create a signature dessert. Semifreddos can also change flavor or even shape, allowing for flavors of the month or flavor series that drive repeat business."

— Kara Nielsen, Trendologist, Center for Culinary Development, San Francisco

"Gelato is emerging, and the pattern has been gelato places and independent Italian restaurants serving gelato. Now, many Italian restaurant chains like Biaggi's, Bravo! Cucina Italiana, Brio Tuscan Grille and Red Brick Pizza have added it to their menus. *Crostatas are also emerging* in chains like Biaggi's and Buca di Beppo. Semifreddos are not far behind."

— Darren Tristano, Executive Vice President, Technomic Inc., Chicago



Take the case of the popular Bitter-Chocolate Ricotta Tart on this fall's menu. "My inspiration was, literally, a cannoli," rather than a cheesecake, says Rogers, an alumnus of Olives in several East Coast locations. "Ricotta, chocolate, a crisp crust — that's cannoli."

The crust for this complex, almost-savory dessert is more buttery than sugary. After baking the crust, Rogers drizzles in a pool of melted 72 percent cacao chocolate and a thin, half-inch layer of fresh ricotta bound with egg yolk and minimal sugar.

The tart is cut into wedges and served with white-chocolate/candied-orange gelato and a sauce-like compote of blood-orange supreme, sautéed in butter and flamed with Disaronno to create an intensely almond-flavored caramel.

"People who expect a 'chocolate cake' at first are surprised, but it's become very, very popular," says Rogers.

Rustic Crusts

This summer, Rogers also experimented with crostata, a rustic, half-covered tart that's a perfect vehicle for fruit. Local stone fruits were particularly successful, but Rogers admits the dessert can be a challenge.

"Fruit is, by its nature, an inconsistent product," he says. "Maybe you have to cook it more because it's watery, or add cornstarch or more or less sugar, depending on how sweet the fruit itself is. In our kitchen it's not an easy production item — the chef has to make it, so we can't serve it all the time."

Sarah Dowling, pastry chef at San Francisco's Ducca, menus a seasonally changing array of individual fruit crostatas, roasting the fruits separately to intensify flavors, then wrapping them in a refined pâte sucrée lined with frangipane for additional sweetness and texture.

"We've done port-roasted figs, nectarines that have been poached in prosecco and caramelized, rum-roasted pineapple," recalls Dowling. "Strawberry-balsamic is always a popular combination for a crostata filling, and it's relatively easy to get your hands on good strawberries in season."

At The Liberty Tavern in Arlington, Va., Executive Chef Liam LaCivita serves a seasonally changing individual crostata; a recent version featured warm strawberries and marasca cherries. Each is baked to order and served with goat-cheese ice cream and cherry syrup. The chef freezes the finished tarts and then cooks them to order from frozen in a wood-burning oven.

LaCivita serves several other traditional Italian desserts, including zeppole — crisp little doughnut-like pastries that are most often associated with street fairs and carnivals. They are also known as St. Joseph's Day Cake for the patron saint's feast day, when they are traditionally enjoyed.

"These are a real Little Italy specialty," says LaCivita, who learned to make them at a previous restaurant where the pastry chef was from Napoli. "But they really fit with the mission of this restaurant, which is to meld the immigrant cultures that created the American food experience — Pennsylvania Dutch, Irish, Italian, German."



Cool, refreshing semifreddo can take on many flavors, including fresh, seasonal stone fruit, and also many forms, such as layered and cut or dished up in interesting serving pieces.

Instead of the usual, heavier, ricotta-based pastry cream, LaCivita's version is filled with lemony zabaglione and candied lemon, then dusted with powdered "carnival sugar."

Another Italian classic is the ricotta cheesecake, prepared traditionally but accessorized with a distinctive vin cotto (a "cooked wine" made by reducing leftover wine until it produces a syrup similar to balsamic vinegar) and chocolate-pine-nut-biscotti.

Identity-Building Desserts

Stefano Cordova, the executive chef of Bertucci's Italian restaurants, also has been experimenting with less commonly known Italian desserts, including mascarpone cheesecake, a lighter take on the traditional ricotta version, and chocolate budino, the Italian answer to chocolate mousse.

"Of course, we offer desserts for the mainstream, like chocolate cake, but we want to stay as current as possible and focus on our Italian identity," says Cordova, who has revolutionized many of the 90-plus-unit chain's menu categories with items from Italy's regional-cuisine heritage.

Bertucci's popular cannoli features the traditional Sicilian filling of sweetened ricotta, which Cordova imports from Italy along with the shells, and bittersweet chocolate chips. Once plated, it's set off on either side by yin-and-yang dustings of powdered sugar and cocoa.

"Italian is America's favorite ethnic food by a huge margin, and as the Mediterranean diet continues to provide healthy, flavorful options, this trend is not going away. Most Italian desserts have been around for hundreds of years, so the chef's challenge is to *keep them fresh via interpretation*. For banquets, we serve macerated berries and zabaglione in a sherry glass, tiramisu in small dipping dishes and ricotta-lemon cheesecake in small glass dishes. The presentation is clean and elegant, and small portions assuage any guilt for our guests and lower costs by eliminating wastes."

— Ellen Burke Van Slyke, Corporate Director, Creative Food and Beverage, Loews Hotels

"We're looking into doing a *zabaglione with fresh fruits*, starting with stone fruit, which we'll change seasonally. This is a great option for those looking for the lighter side of dessert; it's a lighter option than crème brûlée. It gives us a lot of presentation options: The fruit changes seasonally; it can be brûléed; it can be served in different glasses."

— Peter Schonman, Corporate Executive Chef, Biaggi's, Bloomington, Ill.



GELATO *on the Side*

Either alone or nestled against pastry, gelato has snowballed into a major dessert trend on menus, Italian and otherwise. At the Queen Marie Italian Restaurant in Brooklyn Heights, N.Y., the dense frozen treat makes a great vehicle for cross-utilization.

"In the fall, we serve an antipasto of fresh black figs with speck (salted, cold-smoked ham), baked ricotta salata and honey, and I can use the overripe or bruised figs for gelato," says chef/owner Pat Vitiello. And any gelato can be served "affogato" (drowned) with a shot of hot espresso for an easy hot-cold and sweet-bitter experience.

Gelato also features prominently in the affogato Jason Rogers serves at Jill's Restaurant at the St. Julien Hotel & Spa in Boulder, Colo. Describing it on the menu as an "Italian-style sundae" makes this traditional dolce more approachable.

"I love the combination," says Rogers, who starts with vanilla gelato spiked with a shot of homemade limoncello and adds a dollop of whipped cream and crushed amaretti cookies or biscotti. The glass is presented at the table, at which point the waiter pours hot espresso over the dessert in front of the guest.

A local gelateria, run by a friend, makes all Rogers' gelati, and the two have experimented extravagantly with the rich, ice-cream-like dessert. "I have to say, I've really gotten hooked on the stuff, mainly because we've done all these interesting flavors," says the chef, "everything from strawberry-balsamic to Patrón coffee liqueur and brown-butter-walnut."

And talk about cross-utilizing: At Jill's Restaurant, gelato sometimes does double duty on entrée plates.

"We've even made Gorgonzola gelato, which I served with beef carpaccio this summer, tempered a bit so it melts ever so slightly and creates a sauce."

"It's a commitment to bring ricotta all the way from Italy, but it's made differently there — they don't use cornstarch, so you get the pure sweet flavor of milk," he explains.

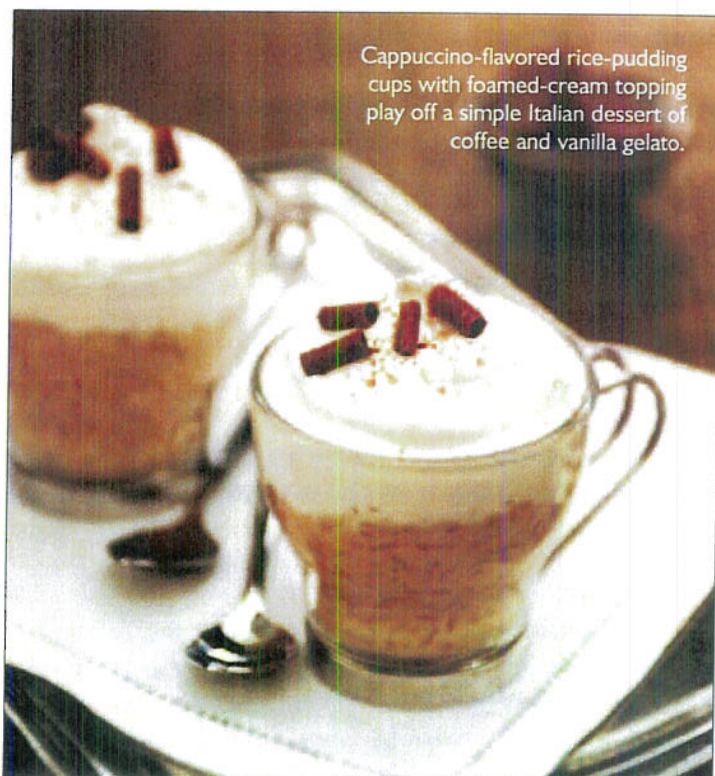
The budino is a chocolate lover's heaven — more than 90 percent chocolate and much denser and more chocolaty than the mousse descriptor on the menu. "We used that description so that people would recognize it, but a true budino is quite different, more like a thick pudding," Cordova explains.

There's also the Bomba, a spumoni-like combination of vanilla and chocolate gelato wrapped in a chocolate skin with a filling of almond and maraschino cherry. The confection is split open to order and served with whipped cream and chocolate sauce. The Bomba is similar to the popular northern-Italian tartufo, which could best be described as a "truffle" of gelato, encased by a shell of chocolate that's often rolled in crushed nuts, especially hazelnuts.

The Bomba and other carefully constructed frozen desserts are labor intensive. Cordova has Bertucci's desserts made off-premises to his specs. "It's better to have them made centrally for consistency, quality and sanitation, especially when you're working with something like imported fresh cheese."

The chef is now hard at work on some new desserts for the coming season, including zuccotto, a traditional dome-shaped Sicilian dessert. Said to be inspired by the dome of Florence's famous Basilica di Santa Maria del Fiore, it's made of sponge cake filled with hazelnuts and hazelnut-chocolate gelati. A Nutella-and-chocolate panini is also planned and will probably be made with Bertucci's pizza dough.

"We wouldn't have to sweeten the dough, and we will serve it with a chocolate sauce to make it even more special," notes Cordova, who is also playing with a Chianti-and-chocolate budino. "That's a very



Cappuccino-flavored rice-pudding cups with foamed-cream topping play off a simple Italian dessert of coffee and vanilla gelato.

USA RICE FEDERATION

MENU Sightings

WARM CHOCOLATE BUDINO CAKE

With coffee gelato and warm caramel

— *Primo, J.W. Marriott Grande Lakes Orlando*

PEACH CROSTATA

Served warm with vanilla gelato

— *Nostrana, Portland, Ore.*

BUDINO DI PANE ALLE UVETTE E CARAMELLO AL "BORSCI"

Warm bread pudding with Borsci caramel sauce and whipped cream

— *Aloi, New Canaan, Conn.*

OLIVE OIL PANNA COTTA

Tomato-blackberry salad, sweet polenta, limoncello sorbetto

— *Viaggio, La Jolla, Calif.*

TORTINO DI PERE

Homemade sliced-pear tart with puff pastry and a thin layer of almond cream, served with vanilla sauce and a touch of chocolate

— *Il Moro, Los Angeles*

traditional but sophisticated combination, and it's very in tune with Italian culture and flavors."

Rustic and Refined

Sophisticated Italian desserts lend themselves well to the ambitious musings of creative pastry chefs.

"I love to work with Italian inspirations, and many of my desserts are based on traditional Venetian pastries," says Dowling at Ducca, which specializes in the cuisine of Venice, including the enticing little bar snacks known as *chicheti*.

Dowling's "cannoli split" riffs on both the sundae and the cannoli traditions. Two cannoli shells are filled with roasted-banana gelato, topped with salted caramel and pistachios and garnished with strawberries sliced paper-thin on a mandoline.

Dowling often uses semolina in baking for its distinctive flavor and texture, as in pudding-like semolina soufflé with intensely flavored pistachio cream, served with smoked-sea-salt brittle and puckery, dried, sour Sicilian cherries, reconstituted and plumped into a sauce.

"I like the simpler Italian dessert ideas," says Dowling. "One of my favorite things in the world is a simple affogato, espresso poured over vanilla gelato, but I turn that sort of inside-out into *otagoffa* — affogato spelled backward — by having the customer pour steamed vanilla milk over espresso gelato.

"It's very simple and not all that sweet," she adds, "the way many Italian desserts are."

Trend TAKE-AWAYS

Menu ideas and strategies from our panel of experts

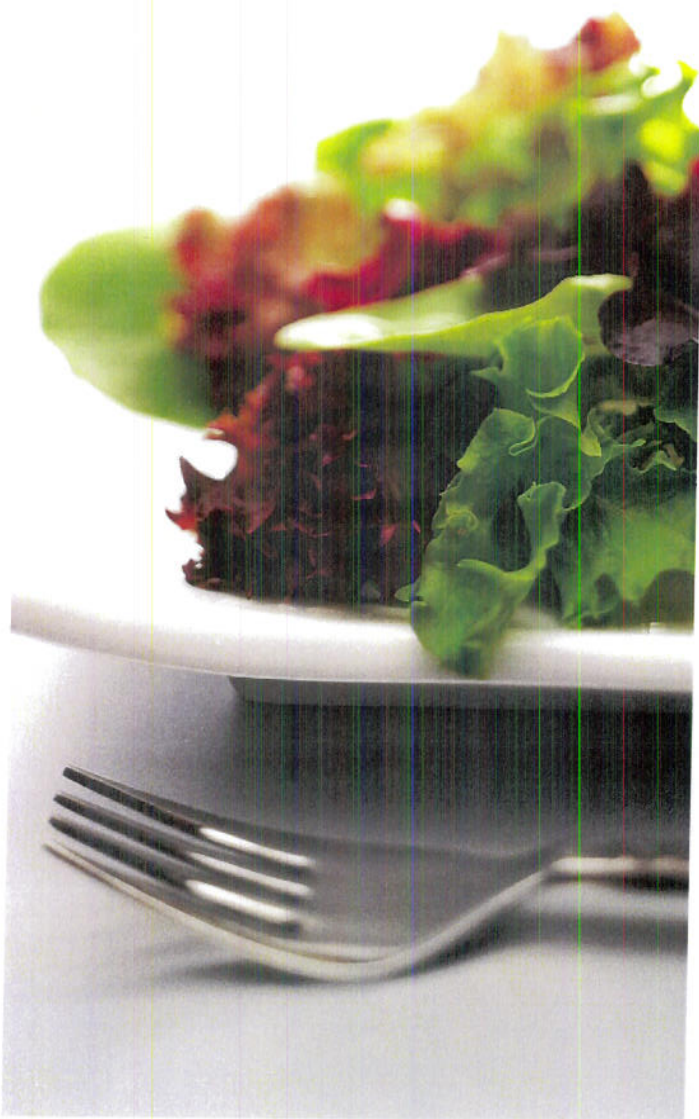
- **POUR ON THE CREAM:** Panna cotta is the easiest dessert to take mainstream. It's made with just a few ingredients; it's easy to add new flavors, like lemon or espresso; it's very easy to prepare and hold. Multi-units can have this manufactured and packed in pouches. It can be warmed and poured into latte cups or martini glasses, then re-cooled. — *Kathy Casey*
- **TAKE A SHOT:** Some casual chains are offering dessert shots to stay on-trend, but more innovation is needed. How about cake spiedini with side shots of foamed liquors? Develop unique desserts that offer value and quality and are portioned to achieve the correct price points and margins for the operator. Aim for small bites of robust flavors that are addictive, and you'll build repeat sales. — *James Brisson*
- **KEEP IT SEMPLICE:** To me, Italian desserts signal a move toward lighter, more simple desserts, often based on regional ingredients, heavy on fruits and with classic adornments, like the plates of Parmesan and pears I had in Parma recently. Affogato — dessert, coffee and sometimes an after-dinner drink, all in one delicious little package — is a simple dessert that pleases everyone. Semolina cake is indestructible, and because it's not too sweet, it's perfect soaked in local honey. Rich ricotta fritters update the outgoing doughnut craze. They work on their own, with sauce or as a component of a more grand presentation. — *Robin Schempp*
- **GO FOR GRANITA:** There's such potential with granita — lemon granita, coffee or almond granita. These Italian staples are the progenitors of the snow cone and a natural next step after the popularity of gelato, sorbetto and frozen drinks. Pinkberry is doing a sophisticated granita, but there's room for more; it can expand the mix at a coffee bar or serve as a snack or light meal alternative. I also like crostatas because the crust is so buttery and almost cookie-like, which means it stands up well to juicy fillings and even dunking in coffee or tea. Filled with almonds, apricots, dried fruit and seasonal fruits such as pears, apples, peaches or any sort of jam, it's easy and cost-effective. — *Priscilla Martel*

from Jill Peterson

Sensational

Summer

SALADS & SOUPS



Mediterranean Chicken Salad

Grilled breast of chicken on a bed of crisp salad greens, Kalamata olives, Israeli couscous and artichoke hearts.

Summer Salad

Fresh hearts blend lettuce, red onion, fennel, Mandarin oranges, celery, fresh basil, Kalamata olives

Bleu Cheese Steak Salad

Grilled, marinated hanger steak over a bed of tossed greens, garnished with bleu cheese, cucumbers, grape tomatoes & fried leeks.

Southwestern Salmon Cake Salad

House recipe, Alaskan salmon cakes with garden greens, grapes, jicama, cilantro, red cabbage, black beans & roasted corn

Tuna Nicoise Salad

Pan seared tombo (sashimi grade albacore tuna) with multicolored marble potatoes, yellow & green beans, grape tomatoes, capers, fennel & hard boiled eggs.

Summer White Gazpacho

With cauliflower, cucumber & toasted almonds

Chilled Avocado Soup

With roasted corn

Table Trends

1



Lunch Triples

The beauty of the Lunch Triple is that it makes your lunch service work harder for you! Offer your customers the opportunity to "create a combo" of a cup of soup, side salad and half a sandwich and they'll think they're getting a great food value. They are! But so are you since instead of the old one-order-two-plate split, now you're getting an extra check!

2



Dinner Duets

Have you noticed how many of your patrons seem to be sharing their dinner entrées these days? Try "lite-sizing" a selection of your most popular entrées and offering them with a full-size dinner salad. Present them along side your regular entrée choices. Your diners with petite appetites will feel you're catering to their needs and preferences.

Barbecue



Barbecue: The Great American Flavor

As spring turns into summer, weekends are punctuated by a new cycle of celebrations: graduations, family reunions, Memorial Day outings and festive Father's Day meals. When consumers crave hearty, flavorful comfort food at this time of year, it's probably picnic-friendly, traditional American heritage fare—above all, barbecue.

Barbecue in its most authentic form is the province of specialty restaurants with their own smokers, where meat is cooked for hours at a relatively low temperature to come out fall-off-the-bone tender. But barbecue as a flavor—in the form of sauces, glazes and rubs—can be a crowd-pleasing part of the culinary repertoire of almost any restaurant. To take advantage of the American addiction to barbecue, however, operators need to be aware of the latest trends.

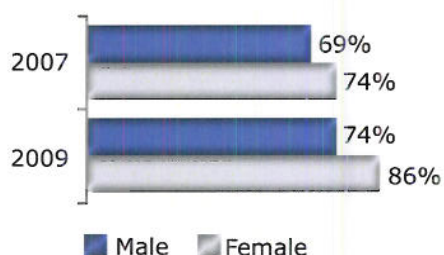
From Regional Tradition to Universal Favorite

No other flavor right now marries retro and trendy in the same way that barbecue does. In an age when diners have become fascinated with regional traditions (Tuscan fare rather than just Italian, for example), barbecue restaurants increasingly offer multiple barbecue styles involving variations in cooking method, rubs and sauces. For instance, Ohio-based City Barbeque specializes in regional American barbecue, including pork shoulder from the Southeast, brisket and sausage from Texas, and ribs from two distinct barbecue-focused cities, Memphis and Kansas City. The fascination with regional barbecue is a trend that has staying power. In a study conducted last year by Restaurants & Institutions magazine, almost four out of 10 consumers expressed strong interest in barbecue and three out of 10 said they'd like to see more Southern-style offerings in general.

In addition to the specialty restaurants that present authentic barbecue prepared in a smoker, barbecue as a flavor is also proliferating in restaurants—and for good reason. Consumers polled by Technomic prefer barbecue over all other flavors as an accent for beef and pork dishes; they also love it as a sauce for chicken wings and as a dip for chicken fingers. Even more interesting: Consumers increasingly want their proteins to be offered with a choice of sauces and dips, and two-thirds are on the lookout for interesting new flavors.

How important is it for you to be able to customize your meal (e.g., choose toppings, sauces, accompaniments and other ingredients) at home?

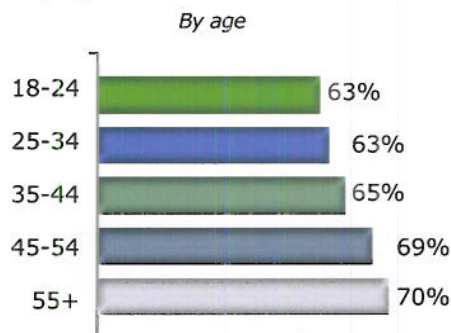
By year and gender: top two box—important and extremely important



Base: 718 consumers aged 18+

Respondents indicated their opinions on a scale of 1-6 where 6 is extremely important and 1 is not important at all

I like trying new flavors from time to time



Base: 1,500 consumers aged 18+

Barbecue Flavor Evolution

Barbecue flavors have extended far beyond regional roots to establish familiarity and acceptance among the leading flavor profiles across many different menu categories and foods—from pork, chicken and burgers to Asian or Latin-accented appetizers and entrées. Barbecue flavors—typically imparted through the use of sauces or glazes—are being tweaked with a wide variety of smoky, spicy, sweet or fruity accents. (A perfect example is Burgerville's Cherry Chipotle Pulled Pork Sandwich, which was part of a cherry promotion last summer.)

Barbecue sauce is consumers' top choice (62%) for a dipping sauce for chicken fingers.

The following page lists a few examples of on-trend barbecue items from a variety of menu categories and ethnic cuisines, drawn from 2009 and 2010 menus.

Barbecue with Ethnic Accents

Since the very word "barbecue" derives from the Spanish *barbacoa*—which itself likely is descended from a Caribbean Indian word for "fire pit," *barabicu*—it makes sense that barbecue with sweet and spicy flavors from Latin and Caribbean cuisines are increasingly popular. Hot and smoky flavors, such as those found in chipotles, jalapeños, and mesquite-grilled fare, are being combined with tropical influences. Examples include:

- **Chipotle Barbecue Ribs**—basted with a smoky-sweet chipotle-raspberry-tamarind barbecue sauce, *El Torito*
- **Tangy BBQ Buffaloco Wings**—with barbecue sauce spiked with chipotles, habaneros and citrus juices, *El Pollo Loco*

In addition, Mexican restaurants are incorporating barbecue flavors in traditional Mexican snacks:

- **Brisket Tacos**—hand-shredded, hickory-smoked brisket in a fresh tortilla with barbecue sauce on the side, *Taco Cabana*
- **Mondo Bonfire BBQ Burrito**—pulled pork, barbecue sauce, coleslaw, choice of black or pinto beans, rice and pico de gallo, *Taco Del Mar*

The biggest news in barbecue is the proliferation of Korean barbecue flavor profiles, set off by the wildly popular Kogi Korean BBQ-to-Go food trucks that tool around Los Angeles offering "Koreanized" tacos and burritos topped with short ribs, chicken, pork or tofu. The Kogi trucks inspired not only a whole species of Asian ethnic food trucks in Los Angeles and other major cities, but also new menu items at "land-based" restaurants, including:

- **Baja Kogi Korean Barbecue Tacos**, *Baja Fresh Mexican Grill*
- **Korean Barbecue Beef Taco**—part of a springtime Pacific Rim Menu promotion, *Gordon Biersch Brewery Restaurant*
- **Spicy Asian BBQ Sandwich**—Steak marinated in pears, green onions and Asian spices, topped with onions, provolone cheese and a spicy Asian barbecue sauce on a fresh roll, *Charley's Grilled Subs*

New Twists on American Classics

Spicy, smoky, sweet and bourbon-, whiskey- or rum-spiked barbecue sauces are amping up flavors for specialty burgers. In particular, there's been a notable trend in both LSRs and FSRs to burgers that pair barbecue sauce with bacon and Cheddar cheese. But other eateries are focusing on the mini-burger or "slider" trend with petite burgers that go beyond beef:

Operators in all restaurant segments have identified barbecue as the top flavor for pork.

- **B.B.Q. Pork Sliders**—barbecue pork topped with coleslaw and spicy barbecue sauce on toasted mini-buns, *Grand Lux Cafe*
- **BBQ Chicken Sliders**, *Claim Jumper*
- **Barbecue Sliders Sampler**—one with pulled pork, one with chopped steak and one with pulled chicken, each served on a toasted mini-bun with a signature sauce, *Sticky Fingers*

Further afield beyond beef, pork and chicken, chefs are turning to seafood—particularly shrimp—for a flavorful interpretation of barbecue.

- **New Orleans BBQ Shrimp**—with smoked tomatoes and roasted celery, sautéed in beer and spicy Bayou barbecue sauce, *Famous Dave's*
- **Chipotle Barbecue Shrimp**—sautéed with jalapeño butter, roasted red peppers and pasilla chilis, with a smoky-sweet chipotle-raspberry-tamarind barbecue sauce, *El Torito*
- **Southwest Tootsy Roll**—shrimp, cream cheese and chives twisted into an eggroll and served with signature Lime Barbecue Sauce, *Whiskey Creek Wood Fire Grill*

Sysco Can Help

The menu possibilities posed by these barbecue trends may seem overwhelming, but your Sysco Marketing Associate can help you understand consumer and operator trends, as well as product and recipe suggestions. Marketing Associates can call on Sysco chefs, experts and resources to help develop, cost out, and market barbecue items that will set your establishment apart from the crowd. Your Marketing Associates can also arrange another invaluable service—the Sysco Business Review, in which Sysco experts evaluate all facets of your business to rev up the menu and other points of differentiation while strengthening the bottom line. (And don't forget Sysco's iCare partner companies, which offer independent operators access to an ever-growing suite of marketing, operational, financial, human resources and environmental services.)

You can rely on Sysco for your barbecue needs, from sure-fire hickory charcoal to the highest quality meat. Sysco can advise you on developing your own signature barbecue flavors or offer suggestions for uses of our flavorful, top-quality barbecue sauces. **Sysco Imperial** sauces are available in a variety of flavor profiles:

- **Original**—a distinctive blend of sweet spices, onion and tomato with a hint of garlic
- **Mild**—a smooth-textured, rich tomato-based sauce with a nice balance of spices that also works wonderfully as a base
- **Smoky**—the nation's #1 selling barbecue sauce for foodservice applications, a medium reddish-brown sauce that combines the perfect balance of natural smoke and spices, creating an authentic wood-smoke flavor
- **Spicy**—a hearty, robust sauce that combines molasses, mustard, tomato, and hickory smoke

Premium **Sysco Imperial Reserve** Barbecue Sauces provide a superior cling that really seals in flavor:

- **Original** recipe features a smooth, sweet blend of tomatoes with a hint of onion and garlic
- **Spicy** sauce gives a "kick" with its robust, smoky base and touch of molasses
- **Smoky** recipe exudes a natural, hickory-smoked flavor that's perfect for dipping and glazes

Or choose **Block & Barrel Barbecue** made with tender beef and pork, including:

- Ready-to-serve Sliced Barbecue Beef Brisket with Sauce
- Western-style Shredded Smoked Pork Barbecue with Sauce
- Chopped Southwestern Barbecue Beef with Sauce

Block & Barrel Barbecue comes fully prepared, frozen and packed in convenient 5-pound resealable tubs or trays. Simply heat and serve, and you've got all the flavor with none of the time-consuming effort.

And, no matter how you shake it, customers can't get enough of **Sysco Imperial** barbecue spices. SUPC#5913181 (IMP/MCC SPICE BBQ GRND) and SUPC# 9765561 (IMP/MCC SEASONING BBQ MESQT) are perfect for beef, pork, poultry, seafood and vegetables. They also go beautifully when added to marinades, sauces, chili, stews, soups, casseroles and gravies. **Sysco Imperial** barbecue seasonings are a delicious blend of high quality spices with a consistent recipe/flavor profile.

For more information, contact www.sysco.com. Information on the Sysco iCare program and iCare partners can be found at www.syscoicare.com.

